

Learning English with CBC Calgary

Weekly Newscast

March 28th, 2014

Lessons prepared by Barbara Edmondson, Kim Chaba-Armstrong & Justine Light

Objectives of the weekly newscast lesson

- to develop listening skills at the CLB 4 level
- to increase vocabulary among learners
- to increase knowledge of news stories
- to provide a self-study tool, as well as an ESL classroom resource



www.alberta.ca

<http://www.cbc.ca/calgary/learning-english/>

News story #1

Before you listen to the first news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Choose the group of synonyms (words with similar meaning) that best match each of the vocabulary words. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Word from the story	Related words
	1) tough	a) prediction estimate
	2) system	b) northern freezing
	3) arctic	c) advise propose
	4) gulf	d) difficult hard
	5) forecast	e) bay cove
	6) suggest	f) pattern arrangement

Extra definitions to help you understand the listening:

meteorologist – a person who studies weather and climate

fed up – to be tired of something; annoyed or angry

Now listen to the first news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: Multiple Choice

Choose the best answer to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. Environment Canada says this has been the coldest winter _____.	a) since 1978-79. b) in 79 years.
2. Most of the country _____ has been stuck in a cold air system.	a) east of the Rockies b) from the Gulf of Mexico
3. This arctic air system has stopped the warm air _____ from moving north.	a) east of the Rockies b) from the Gulf of Mexico
4. _____ are suggesting that the cold weather will continue.	a) Canada's meteorologist predictions b) Environment Canada's forecasts
5. Everywhere except _____ will be cold through the first half of April.	a) the Rockies b) the west coast
6. An Environment Canada meteorologist says a lot of Canadians are just _____.	a) fed up with winter b) feeding too much in winter

Discussion Questions

Are you fed up with winter? What do you look forward to doing when the snow melts?

News story #2

Before you listen to the second news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Use one of the vocabulary words below to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

toll (count)	steadily (slow but constant)	soaked (very wet)
rural (countryside)	collapse (to fall down)	authorities (police or people in control)
firm (solid or clear)	siblings (sisters/brothers)	debris (what is left after something is destroyed)

Extra definitions to help you understand the listening:

landslide/ mudslide – when a huge amount of land or mud slips and moves down a hill or mountain

1. People who live in _____ Alberta often have to drive into the city for work.
2. I didn't bring my umbrella, so I got _____ when I had to walk home in the rain.
3. I have two younger _____ who still live with our parents.
4. People are still searching for _____ from Malaysian Flight 370.
5. _____ still do not know what happened to that missing airplane. There is no _____ evidence to show where the plane went after it turned around.
6. The price of houses and condos has _____ increased over time.
7. After a major accident, the death _____ is often announced by the media.
8. A tsunami, hurricane or earthquake may cause buildings to _____.

Now listen to the second news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: True/False

Decide whether the statements below are **True** or **False**. Write your answer in the blanks. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. ____ A hillside collapsed on Saturday.
2. ____ This event happened in Washington DC, the capital of the United States.
3. ____ Authorities have a good idea how many people are missing and possibly dead.
4. ____ The mud and debris are at least 25 metres thick in some areas.
5. ____ Twenty-five or more homes were destroyed by the landslide.
6. ____ A four-year-old boy survived but his family is still missing.
7. ____ The boy was in an upstairs bedroom when the mudslide occurred.

Discussion Questions

Do you live in an area that could be affected by a landslide? What natural disasters could occur where you live? Do you have a plan to protect yourself in these emergency situations?

News story #3

Before you listen to the third news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Match the words with their definitions. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Word	Definition
	1. take a turn	a) had to move out of your home
	2. flood	b) change completely
	3. displaced	c) to have a party because you are happy about something such as a birthday or other special event
	4. representative	d) a special event to raise money for something
	5. figure out	e) when water flows out of a river or lake onto land that is usually dry
	6. celebrate	f) a charity or good work
	7. fundraiser	g) solve a problem or make a decision
	8. cause	h) a person who speaks for an organization

Extra definitions to help you understand the listening:

STARS – Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service organization – an emergency service that transports very ill or seriously injured people to hospital by helicopter

Missions

Now listen to the third news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: Short Answer

Read and answer the questions below. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. What happened to the Kropf family last June?
2. What did they win this week?
3. How much is their prize worth?
4. When are they planning to move?
5. How many missions did STARS fly last year?
6. How much money did STARS raise in the lottery?

Discussion Questions

Do you ever buy lottery tickets? If you won a dream home in another city, what would you do? Move? Stay? Sell the home?

Language Focus

Present tense - Sometimes when we hear the news, they use the simple present tense rather than the simple past or another verb tense.

Here are some examples from the first story this week:

"If you **think** it's been a long, tough winter, you **are** right."

"Environment Canada **says** this has been the coldest winter since 1978-79."

"And winter **is** not done yet."

"Matt MacDonald, an Environment Canada meteorologist, **says** a lot of Canadians **are** just fed up of winter, and it just **doesn't want** to end."

Common situations where we use the present tense:

- When we talk about something true in the present
 - I am a student.
- When we report facts or say something that is always true
 - Alberta is cold in the winter.
- When we talk about habitual actions (things that occur regularly)
 - I go to school. I eat lunch at school.
- When we use adverbs of frequency (sometimes, always...), we often use the present tense.
 - I usually take the bus to school.
- When we explain an action set by a timetable or schedule
 - English class begins at 11am.
- When we talk about the future with a specific time/date
 - The bus leaves at 6pm tonight.

Forming the present simple

The present tense is the **base form** of the verb:

I **work** at a school.

Third person (she/he/it) adds an **-s**:

He **works** in a store.

Present simple when it is negative – you must add the verb **do**. You add an **-es** on the do, not the main verb for the third person case

I **do not** (eat) .

We **do not** (run) .

You **do not** (study) .

They **do not** (drink) .

He/she **does not** (sing) .

You **do not** (exercise) .

Be verb is an exception to these rules:

I **am / am not**

We **are / are not**

You **are / are not**

They **are / are not**

He/she/it **is / is not**

You **are / are not**

Transcripts of Weekly News Stories

	MARCH 28 TH WEEKLY NEWS STORIES	TIME
Introduction	Hi, I'm Rosa Marchitelli and this is Learning English with CBC for March 28 th .	0:00
Story 1	If you think it's been a long, tough winter, you are right. Environment Canada says this has been the coldest winter since 1978-79. Most of the country east of the Rockies has been stuck in a system of cold arctic air pushing south that has stopped the warm air from the Gulf of Mexico from moving north as much as it usually would. And winter is not done yet. Environment Canada's forecasts are suggesting that the cold weather will continue off and on at least through the first half of April, pretty much everywhere except the west coast. Matt MacDonald, an Environment Canada meteorologist, says a lot of Canadians are just fed up with winter, and it just doesn't want to end.	0:10
-Story 2	The death toll has been steadily increasing since a hillside, soaked in rain, in rural Washington state, collapsed on Saturday. Days after the huge landslide, authorities still had no firm idea how many people were missing and possibly buried. The mess of mud, trees and debris is almost 5 metres thick in some places. At least 25 homes were destroyed. The only rescues came early. Four-year-old Jacob Spillers was in an upstairs room when the mudslide crashed into his home, and rescuers found him and took him to safety. But his father and three half-siblings remained in the house and were among the missing.	01:15
Story 3	A High River family's luck has finally taken a turn - for the better. Their home was badly damaged in June's flood and they were displaced for months. They are still facing thousands of dollars in repairs. But a morning phone message this week left by a STARS representative meant a major change of plans. William and Tonya Kropf were told they just won the dream home in Red Deer worth a million dollars in the STARS lottery. The family still isn't sure if they'll move. For now, they're just trying to figure out how to celebrate the win. Last year, STARS flew more than 16 hundred missions. The lottery is the organization's largest fundraiser. This year, it raised 11 million dollars. William and Tonya Kropf say they were happy just giving to the cause and this win is beyond what they'd imagined possible.	02:16

Appendix: Answer keys

News story 1

Vocabulary

Answer	Word from the story	Related words
d	1) tough	a) prediction estimate
f	2) system	b) northern freezing
b	3) arctic	c) advise propose
e	4) gulf	d) difficult hard
a	5) forecast	e) bay cove
c	6) suggest	f) pattern arrangement

Listening

1. Environment Canada says this has been the coldest winter _____.	a) since 1978-79. b) in 79 years.
2. Most of the country _____ has been stuck in a cold air system.	a) east of the Rockies b) from the Gulf of Mexico
3. This arctic air system has stopped the warm air _____ from moving north.	a) east of the Rockies b) from the Gulf of Mexico
4. _____ are suggesting that the cold weather will continue.	a) Canada's meteorologist predictions b) Environment Canada's forecasts
5. Everywhere except _____ will be cold through the first half of April.	a) the Rockies b) the west coast
6. An Environment Canada meteorologist says a lot of Canadians are just _____.	a) fed up with winter b) feeding too much in winter

News story 2

Vocabulary

1. People who live in **rural** Alberta often have to drive into the city for work.
2. I didn't bring my umbrella, so I got **soaked** when I had to walk home in the rain.
3. I have two younger **siblings** who still live with our parents.
4. People are still searching for **debris** from Malaysian Flight 370.
5. **Authorities** still do not know what happened to that missing airplane. There is no **firm** evidence to show where the plane went after it turned around.

6. The price of houses and condos has steadily increased over time.
7. After a major accident, the death toll is often announced by the media.
8. A tsunami, hurricane or earthquake may cause buildings to collapse.

Listening

1. T A hillside collapsed on Saturday.
2. F This event happened in Washington DC, the capital of the United States.
3. F Authorities have a good idea how many people are missing and possibly dead.
4. F The mud and debris are at least 25 metres thick in some areas.
5. T Twenty-five or more homes were destroyed by the landslide.
6. T A four-year-old boy survived but his family is still missing.
7. T The boy was in an upstairs bedroom when the mudslide occurred.

News story 3

Vocabulary

Answer	Word	Definition
b	1. take a turn for the better	a) had to move out of your home
e	2. flood	b) change completely in a good way
a	3. displaced	c) to have a party because you are happy about something such as a birthday or other special event
h	4. representative	d) a special event to raise money for something
g	5. figure out	e) when water flows out of a river or lake onto land that is usually dry
c	6. celebrate	f) a charity or good work
d	7. fundraiser	g) solve a problem or make a decision
f	8. a cause	h) a person who speaks for an organization

Listening

1. What happened to the Kropf family last June? **Their home was badly damaged in the flood in High River.**
2. What did they win this week? **They won a dream home.**
3. How much is their prize worth? **It is worth \$1 million.**
4. When are they planning to move? **They are not sure if they will move.**
5. How many missions did STARS fly last year? **1,600 missions in 2013.**
6. How much money did STARS raise in the lottery? **\$11 million.**